**Waterspace Planning and the River Thames in London**

**Abstract**

London is a city that stands, for many, at the pinnacle of neoliberal global urbanization and market-led residential and commercial property investment. Its iconic River Thames has become a focus for much of this development, particularly of luxury apartments. There has been an emerging sense that the river increasingly has been captured by a specific set of class interests and its edges privatized to the exclusion of other claims on the Thames’ identity, usage and meaning. Although cognisant of the power of private and property interests and the leverage they may exercise through state mechanisms, this paper interprets London’s 'waterspace' policy and planning in a way that rejects interpretations of the river that simplistically foreground the will of capital and global neoliberalism.

KEYWORDS: Waterspace planning, River Thames, Neoliberal urbanism, Blue Ribbon Network (BRN)

*‘Cause London is drowning, and I, I live by the river.*

* The Clash, *London Calling,* 1979

Ironically, in 1979, when London punk rock band The Clash signalled the city’s vulnerability to flooding, relatively few people lived next to the River Thames. This lack of interest in riverfront living was less to do with the threat of inundation than the manner in which deindustrialization and the relocation of London’s docklands had left a legacy of abandoned wharfs, empty warehouses and vacant riverside land, particularly in the east and south of the city. Aside from providing locations for shoot-outs in Thames Television’s police drama series *The Sweeney*, there was little interest in such land as an ideal location for residential development.[[1]](#endnote-1) Over 30 years later, the post-industrial Thames riverside revealed in Nick Love’s 2012 cinematic homage *Sweeney* is very different. The threat of inundation has been reversed as the city deposits a landscape of exclusive high-rise luxury residential developments, warehouse conversions and grossly inflated land values along the river’s edges (see Figure 1).[[2]](#endnote-2) Moreover, the Thames itself is far from immune from development proposals, from plans for helicopter landing pads to floating swimming pools, leisure arcades and promenades, and even a river-based cycle route.[[3]](#endnote-3)

*Figure 1: St George Wharf viewed from Vauxhall Bridge*

This transposed drowning — of the river by the city — testifies to the dynamic and shifting character of late capitalist urbanization and signals the kinds of new challenges that are raised for planning, the key medium through which change in the built environment is publically mediated. Such waterfront development is by no means unique to London. From Baltimore to Barcelona, waterfront redevelopment schemes have been identified as one of the key spatial expressions of the economic and social restructuring of cities.[[4]](#endnote-4) International processes of riverside and waterfront transformation have also been cast as part of the global triumph of a neoliberal form of urbanism. The character and potency of neoliberal urbanism has been extensively discussed by a range of authors. [[5]](#endnote-5) It has been conceptualized as an interconnected set of policies and subjectivities that foreground discourses of entrepreneurship and market efficiency over social equity and welfare, alongside practices of deregulation, privatization and economic liberalization. Since the 1970s cities have been seen as pivotal arenas of neoliberal transformation with city governments and quasi-public agencies being drawn into an increasingly competitive chase for the investment and consumption decisions of speculative financial capital, transnational corporations and elite groups. More contemporary discourses and policies of financial austerity have further intensified these struggles and their socio-economic consequences.

For many commentators, this contemporary era of transnational neoliberal urbanism is far from progressive and it has been cast as parasitic in its effects on cities.[[6]](#endnote-6) Public discourses of ‘regeneration’, ‘renaissance’ and ‘renewal’ are seen as little more than a linguistic masquerade for the public subsidy of private property development, which in turn is socially iniquitous in the way it treats land purely as a speculative financial asset.The result is the displacement of existing communities and the increased privatization of the public realm.[[7]](#endnote-7) In this respect, waterfront development schemes are often cited as key illustrations of new forms of privatization and regulation of public space.[[8]](#endnote-8) Global cities, such as London, are at the apex of this planetary transformation, the implication being that riverside ‘opportunity areas’ are little more than government-sanctioned safe investment havens for mobile global capital (see Figure 2).

*Figure 2: Imagined luxury and a riverside view for global investors?*

Such critical analysis has done much to forward our understanding of city development processes. It would be naïve indeed to overlook the power of land ownership and property rights, and the ways in which any ‘factor that threatens to reduce or impede the flow of rent or development profit must swim against the tide’.[[9]](#endnote-9) There are numerous examples in London: a quick wander around many a waterfront scheme can soon confirm this debilitating picture of contemporary urbanism.

In political and conceptual terms, however, it is also important to avoid constructing a singular interpretation of neoliberal urbanism, casting it as universally hegemonic and always and everywhere the same. Such portrayals leave little space for understanding counter processes of public resistance and participation, and potentially overlook institutional bargaining and mediation. This is a theme that has been opened up by a number of authors.[[10]](#endnote-10) Drawing upon experiences of discourses and practices of regeneration in London, Keith, for example, has recently signalled the importance of contrasting values systems, technologies and forms of expertise that have the potential to be combined in such a way that processes of city transformation are contested and ‘pushed ever so gently towards a more egalitarian public good’.[[11]](#endnote-11) Keith emphasises the importance of viewing the city as a site that is ‘slightly more contingent’, so that we might be ‘slightly more optimistic about the city yet to come’[[12]](#endnote-12). Similarly, Brownill—who has written powerfully about the transformation of London’s Docklands—is explicit in signalling the dangers of post-hoc rationalization of such schemes as uncontested ‘mega-projects’ churned out by a conveyor belt of neoliberal urbanism[[13]](#endnote-13).

In this paper I argue that a focus on waterspace planning can act as a means of powerfully opening up a broader understanding of the ways in which neoliberal urbanism may be politically mediated. Although waterfront and waterspace might be seen as interchangeable terms, my specific use of waterspace is intended to capture a distinctive form and set of challenges for planning. In particular, it refers to water bodies that have a flowing dynamic quality, most notably urban rivers, as opposed to more static entities, such as enclosed docks and marinas. Such spaces have multifunctional qualities and embody a whole set of socio-economic, political and environmental interdependencies[[14]](#endnote-14). As a result, and certainly much more than static water bodies that front development schemes, these waterspaces help configure networks of cross-border cooperation and stakeholder engagement. It is within the politics of such waterspace networks that this paper reveals moments and processes of mediation and resistance. The focus on waterspace planning is then a conceptual intervention as well as an argument for taking the shape of waterspace planning networks seriously.

The River Thames as it flows in and through London is used to explore the idea of waterspace planning networks to provide a more nuanced sense of how neoliberal urbanism has been enacted. The River Thames is important to the meaning of London and the identity of many of its inhabitants. How the river functions, is being developed and the ways in which it has been represented have not gone uncontested, but have been subject to processes of resistance and mediation that are easily overlooked. Rather than just a thing – a river – the Thames can be cast as a process, and a multiplicity of different practices, possibilities and forms of belonging and identity. Drawing on the ideas of Latour, the Thames can be viewed as a non-human ‘actant’; something that participates and has effects through the ways it creates and mediates networks of association between different political participants[[15]](#endnote-15).

The paper first details the evolution of distinctive understandings and sets of policies for waterspace planning in London. Second, it outlines the networks of governance and civic action that have formed concerning the river. Finally, it foregrounds some specific moments of struggle which demonstrate the porosity of the planning system. The paper emphasises the kinds of negotiable outcomes that can deliver public benefits that are responsive to the lives and identities of London and the full capacities of its iconic river. Such stories of spaces and moments will attempt to disrupt uniform representations of neoliberal riparian and marine urbanism.

It is important to emphasise from the outset that the paper does not represent an attempt to evaluate policy or to assess the progress of strategic planning frameworks, such as the Blue Ribbon Network (BRN) of the Greater London Authority (GLA). This is because the task is always partial and counterfactual knowledge is impossible; what would have happened if such policies and frameworks had not existed? Further, however, it is important to highlight the ways in which a policy evaluation narrative frequently freezes a particular moment or set of spaces in time, to the exclusion of more dynamic understandings.

There have been a number of attempts to assess the progress of strategic planning frameworks for London’s waterspaces.[[16]](#endnote-16) These have come from journalistic sources, policy communities and academia. Most—to a greater or lesser degree—have been disappointed, some profoundly so.[[17]](#endnote-17) In 2001 journalist Giles Worsley, for example, urged ‘all architects and planners hang their heads in shame’ for the ‘ugly and unimaginative way the Thames has been developed as it winds through London’, whilst Deyan Sudjic suggests the ‘river has become a thin strip of affluence, existing in a bubble that has nothing to do with life in the rest of the city just a street behind’.[[18]](#endnote-18)

Academic evaluation has been more measured. Anton *et al*, for example, detail the complex transformations of the waterspaces of the Lea valley in the run-up to the 2012 Olympic Games.[[19]](#endnote-19) Davidson has provided some valuable insights into how the ‘gated character’ of private residential waterfront development schemes often fail architecturally and socially to integrate with existing neighbourhoods and provide much in the way of affordable housing[[20]](#endnote-20). As a result, he concludes ‘the inclusive spaces and society envisaged in the Blue Ribbon Network policy are not being realised’[[21]](#endnote-21). However, whilst Davidson acknowledges that the analysis captures only one moment in time, relatively few spaces (based on three waterfront schemes) and only one aspect of the multiple aims of the BRN, nevertheless the narrative lock-out has already taken place. It is important, therefore, to be alive to alternative moments, spaces and processes of negotiation that mediate and resist hegemonic neoliberalism if we are to avoid representing neoliberal power as something that prevents us from acting.

***Blue revolution: New understandings of waterspace planning***

Just as much new riverside development in London arguably has ignored the true potential and attributes of rivers as spaces—treating them merely as an aesthetic backdrop and view to be marketed to affluent consumers—there is equally a risk that critical analysis of transformational processes can fail to say much about the river itself as a subject for planning, treating it as a backdrop to the analysis of processes of class dispossession occurring on its edges. Further, it is important to acknowledge the extent to which waterspace planning has in fact developed within the last 30 years. An increasingly complex understanding of the challenges of planning for a ‘waterspace’ such as the Thames has evolved, that has become sensitive to the multiple lives and identities of the city, along with the particular characteristics and capacities of water as an object for planning.[[22]](#endnote-22) Such ideas about waterspace planning have formed part of a much wider discursive shift within the planning profession, away from the more narrowly defined practice of ‘land-use’ planning to a recognition of the complexities of ‘spatial planning’ so that we might move beyond spaces as parts of regulated management regimes to the creation of more sensory and psychologically meaningful places.[[23]](#endnote-23)

Rivers are now appreciated as dynamic and interdependent spaces. Development at one point along the bank or encroachment into a river system can have ecological implications both up and downstream. Similarly, the enhanced use of a river system for transportation and freight-use requires coordinated interventions to protect wharfs and piers along its length. Waterspaces, in particular, need to be understood as multifunctional spaces. The Thames in London is at the same time: a space of nature and ecological habitat; an economic resource, crucial to tourism and the global marketing and branding of the city’s image; a living space for houseboat owners; a recreational space; a major transport artery for people and freight; a cultural resource and setting for festivals, practices of socialization and civic identity.

Moreover, emergent literatures on ‘wellbeing’ and planning are becoming alive to the importance of water to human spiritual and emotional security and fulfilment; how they can act as a ‘place tonic’ crucial to individual and community cohesion[[24]](#endnote-24).

These ideas and insights into the qualities of waterspaces have become embedded within London’s local authority development plans, management frameworks and supplementary planning guidance, and an array of other water-focussed policy documents and strategies. As such, these discourses play important roles in attempts to improve the design of riverside environments, in negotiations over development proposals and in contested claims over how to make best use of the river (see Figure 3).

*Figure 3 near here: An example of poor design for riverside environments near London Bridge.*

At one level, it must be acknowledged that any discussion of policy development risks imposing an orderly narrative onto events which in practice were disconnected and contingent. However, a series of key moments in London have been important for the advancement of the vocabulary and understanding of spatial planning for the Thames. The River Thames and its hinterlands have not always been the setting for such a rich landscape of policy as we see now, nor was it so consciously conceptualized as an asset.[[25]](#endnote-25) Despite six years of preparation and a public enquiry, the Greater London Council’s (GLC) *Greater London Development Plan*, adopted in 1976, devoted five somewhat prosaic pages to the river. The first real comprehensive and systematic approach to the river and its environs appeared in the GLC’s 1986 *Thames-side Guidelines*, produced in part as a reaction to government rejection of proposals in its *Proposed Alterations to the Greater London Development Plan*.[[26]](#endnote-26) Although the GLC Guidelines were in many respects a model and inspiration for future stewardship of the Thames, the GLC’s abolition that same year meant this approach was launched into an environment of increasingly fragmented river governance across such bodies as the 17 London riparian local councils, the Port of London Authority, Department of the Environment, British Waterways and the Thames Water Authority amongst others.

The Local Government Act 1985, which laid the framework for abolishing the GLC thereby initiating a lack of strategic planning co-ordination and policy for the Thames, attempted to make some amends by requiring London borough councils to establish a Greater London joint planning committee, resulting in the London Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC). This was an under-resourced agency, but nevertheless LPAC produced in 1991 its *Planning Guidelines for Permanently-Moored Vessels and Structures on the River Thames in Greater London*, followed in 1994 by *Advice to Government on Strategic Planning Guidance for London*.[[27]](#endnote-27) Central government gradually began to demonstrate a more sympathetic response to such concerns. The appointment of Stephen Norris as Minister for Transport in London in 1992 led to the River Thames Working Group, which examined river transport potential, and a 1994 report reinforced representations of the Thames as a working river.[[28]](#endnote-28) The 1995 *Thames Strategy*, a report by consultants Arup commissioned for the Government Office for London by John Gummer (Secretary of State since 1993), also helped underpin a new strategic planning framework to guide the development plan activities of London’s riparian authorities[[29]](#endnote-29). This culminated in 1997 with *RPG3B/9B* *Strategic Planning Guidance for the River Thames,*[[30]](#endnote-30) which attempted to synthesise the evolving policy framework, recommending that local planning authorities designate a distinctive 'Thames Policy Area' for development management and decision-making.

For many activists, however, much new policy guidance still fell short of the kind of understanding and vision necessary to fully appreciate the possibilities and significance of the River Thames. It was the London River Authority (from 1990, London Rivers Association)—a lobby organisation representing riparian local authorities and other river users, interest groups and agencies— that above all gave voice to these more profound approaches to the river. Formed in 1986 as a response to the abolition of the Greater London Council and the perceived absence of a strategic voice for London’s river systems, its conferences, such as ‘Rivers of Meaning’ (1995) and ‘River Calling’ (1998), documented the river and brought together contributions from a cross-section of river activists, users, planners and scholars. The supporting conference publications remain seminal texts in the evolution of a vocabulary for waterspace planning in London and beyond.[[31]](#endnote-31)

In one sense, what lies at the core of these publications is a cautionary and deeply philosophical message for urban planning and indeed for the very desire to plan. Drawing upon understandings of space provided by French philosopher and urbanist Henri Lefebvre, they warn against a managerialist planning profession, treating city spaces, such as rivers, as ‘abstract spaces’ that can be strategically isolated, engineered and optimized through technocratic interventions.[[32]](#endnote-32) The same can be said of the abstract calculations of land as an empty space made by a neoliberal property development industry. Instead such spaces should be viewed as ‘differential spaces’, places of meaningfulness that:

“…start from the notion of the *river as a space* (emphasis in original) not in the sense of two dimensional space upon which lines of demarcation, of boundaries and territories can be placed, but a more nuanced space, capable of embracing social, cultural, economic and ecological connections”[[33]](#endnote-33)

Static, two-dimensional plans create powerful discourses and influential ‘representations of space’ that seek to control, order and regulate, but are insufficiently complex to understand the multi-dimensional character and meaning of spaces such as rivers. Plans, then, can act as ‘bulldozers of the mind and senses’[[34]](#endnote-34). Planning, if indeed that is what it should be called, needs to set an understanding of the river as a ‘social space’—including its sensory, cultural and spiritual character, and what it means for urban societies and individuals—alongside its ecological nature and how it best functions as an economic resource (see Figure 4).

*Figure 4 near here: The Thames foreshore near Tower Bridge—a starting point for understanding the multifunctional character of waterspaces*

London Rivers Association (LRA) publications also provided commentary on the evolving strategic planning advice and policy for the Thames, notably *RPG3B/9B* and work toward defining the Thames Policy Area. The LRA argued that planning guidance remained locked into a vocabulary of land-use. Planning policy and guidance did not start from the river, but from the land beside it, focusing on views across the river to other landmarks and development briefs for land. Moreover, the complex boundaries, powers and structures of regulation, ownership and governance for the Thames were undermining plan delivery; a situation made more pressing by the absence of a publically accountable strategic authority, and increasingly powerful expectations and monitoring of waterspace plan-making by riparian authorities. Perhaps, therefore, a new ‘blue-belt’ planning instrument, backed by a representative Thames Commission of key interests, might better serve the needs of the river and – like the ever durable and popular greenbelt – capture the public’s imagination for the Thames?[[35]](#endnote-35)

Whilst the LRA did not get its ‘blue belt’—a discourse which in retrospect does sound somewhat inflexible and controlling—following the reinstatement of a publically accountable Greater London Authority (GLA) in 2000, with its 2004 London Plan, there did emerge a 'Blue Ribbon Network' (BRN): an extensive and bespoke set of principles and policy objectives for the protection, enhancement and sustainable use of the River Thames along with all the other city water bodies, such as tributary rivers, canals, docks and reservoirs. Moreover, the spatial vocabulary of this planning framework (see Figure 5) explicitly outlined the complex multifunctional character of Thames waterspaces and stated that it was ‘taking the water as the starting point for decision making’ - a phrase drawn specifically from LRA publications[[36]](#endnote-36).

*Figure 5 about here – see table at end of paper*

***A river runs through it: networks of political and civic action for London’s waterspaces***

What should also be drawn from the outline above of the evolution of London’s waterspace policy is that it is a product of many years of active campaigning, policy commitment, and negotiation from a range of participants and activists. Waterspace urbanism in London has been, and continues to be, scrutinized through formal and informal networks of government agencies, local campaign groups, civic activism and volunteering which impact upon battles over the identity and meaning of its river. This more dynamic understanding can be missed when evaluating policy at particular points in time or on the evidence of a selective range of sites and spaces. River Thames groups include: its community, educational and environmental river charities, such as Thames21, Thames Rivers Trust and Thames Explorer Trust; cultural organisations, such as the Thames Festival Trust; campaigning charities such the River Thames Society and stakeholder forums such as the Thames Estuary Partnership; river users and trade associations, such as the Thames River Users Group.[[37]](#endnote-37) Such groups have been active in constructing the river as a meaningful differential space, thereby making it more resistant to the abstract spatial financial calculations of neoliberal profitability.[[38]](#endnote-38) Paying attention to river space as a campaigning space, therefore, allows a more subtle sense of the mediation of neoliberal urbanism and a richer understanding of it as a site of historical, social and political dialogue.

The LRA is one example of the kinds of political networks that have formed around the Thames. As highlighted in the previous section, the LRA sought to bring a new imagination and vocabulary to planning for the Thames, until it was finally dissolved in 2007. Driven and underpinned by the political energies of George Nicholson—former GLC planning committee chair and long standing Bermondsey councillor and activist—the LRA was sponsored by a range of agencies and, in particular, financial contributions from a number of riparian London boroughs. It conducted research, monitored development proposals and provided a forum for river debates and stakeholder interests.

A second illustration of the river’s actor networks can be seen in the development of Thames 'landscape strategies'. Landscape strategy documents, which seek to provide development frameworks for the river through assessment of its aesthetic and landscape qualities, are the product of partnerships between statutory agencies and local interest groups conscious of the dynamic role the Thames plays in the lives of local people. The 1991 Countryside Commission’s *Thames Path Design Guide* provided an initial impetus, but most significant was the 1994 *Thames Landscape Strategy: Hampton to Kew*.[[39]](#endnote-39) This pioneering report was produced by Kim Wilkie Associates for the Thames Landscape Steering Group (a partnership comprised of Elmbridge Council, the west London Boroughs of Hounslow, Richmond and Kingston, the Countryside Commission, English Heritage, the Royal Fine Art Commission Trust, English Nature, the National Rivers Authority and private benefactors). It also consulted widely with local communities and other interest groups, private landowners and tenants. This pioneering report—which presented a rich and sophisticated analysis of vistas and habitats along the western Arcadian Thames, creating a 100-year strategic vision for the river corridor along with a set of illustrative 'acceptable development' proposals— was recognised with awards in 1995 from both the Royal Town Planning Institute and Landscape Institute.[[40]](#endnote-40) It influenced the Environment Agency's *Tidal Thames Landscape Assessment and Design Guidelines* (1996) and provided a model for the treatment of other sections of the Thames by later sub-regional partnership groups, notably the Thames Strategy - Kew to Chelsea (2002) and Thames Strategy East(2008).[[41]](#endnote-41) As well as the legal purchase these documents provide, as a basis for supplementary planning guidance for local authority decision-making, their monitoring continues to spawn community action and involvement, as illustrated by the more recent *Thames Landscape Strategy Review: Hampton to Kew* (2012).[[42]](#endnote-42)

Other networks brought into being and configured by the Thames are centred upon the river’s bio-regional geography and physical properties which operate as the key mediator. The European Union’s Water Framework Directive (WFD) (2000), part of UK law since 2003, requires member states to protect and improve water environments on the basis of river basin management plans. Part of this requirement is to actively involve the public and relevant stakeholders in this task, a form of ‘watershed democracy’ that arguably replaces more managerialist forms of river basin management dating from the 1970s.[[43]](#endnote-43) Subsequent implementation and consultation strategies take the river’s physical geographies as starting points. The Environment’s Agency 2009 *River Basin Management Plan for the Thames River Basin District* is one example, so too the subsequent ‘Catchment-Based Approach’ to river management, as exemplified by the *Your Tidal Thames Pilot Project* (2012), hosted by Thames 21 and Thames Estuary Partnership.[[44]](#endnote-44) Biodiversity action plans (BAPs) and river restoration strategies, such as the network of local authorities, developers, NGOs and community groups brought together by the 2009 *London Rivers Action Plan* are another example of networks which play important roles in shaping riparian development.[[45]](#endnote-45) As with the WFD, these policy measures and actions also stem from international forums—in the case of BAPs, the United Nations-initiated Convention on Biological Diversity—and provide an example of 'multi-level governance', with the supra-national level aiding local participatory processes and methods.[[46]](#endnote-46)

The very multiplicity and complexity of the Thames as waterspace has necessitated networks of action and dialogue. For planners, waterspaces and urban rivers are particularly ‘wicked problems’ given the competing and potentially intractable preferences, rights and claims to which they are subject[[47]](#endnote-47). Complexity demands new, more integrated, solutions.[[48]](#endnote-48) One response has been the 'communicative’ or ‘collaborative turn’ in planning theory and practice.[[49]](#endnote-49) Drawing upon the work of German philosopher Jürgen Habermas and his notion of deliberative democracy, collaborative approaches seek to position planners as mediating and facilitating dialogue between different social, political and cultural structures across the terrains of complex ‘mongrel cities’.[[50]](#endnote-50) Collaborative planning draws attention to the need for a more reflexive understanding of styles of language and the power relations they conceal. How are meanings and values communicated during the policy process, and what kinds of skills can be used to mediate in battles over living and economic space so that ‘stroppy strangers live together without doing each other too much violence’?[[51]](#endnote-51) The managerialist literature on stakeholder management has also been integral to how Habermas’ ideas have been mandated by the state[[52]](#endnote-52).

This new ‘spatial turn’ in planning, where practitioners seek to move beyond traditional physical design practices and forms of governance, which treat the city as a series of isolated sub-systems that can be optimized and engineered through technocratic means, also indicates the need for innovative structures and collaborative approaches to governance, for example, by constructing new ‘alternative administrative geographies’.[[53]](#endnote-53) These, by necessity, are based upon ‘fuzzy boundaries’ but through their cross-sector and multi-actor qualities the hope is that traditional resistances and conflicts are broken down to create new capacities for collaborative decision-making and long-term sustainability[[54]](#endnote-54).

The emergence then of those bodies outlined above, such as the LRA, or indeed the more recent London Waterways Commission (LWC), illustrate such relational and ‘soft’ spaces for spatial planning and governance. The LWC was set up by the GLA in 2006 to bring together a wide range of governmental agencies, NGOs and community stakeholders to address waterspace issues and provide a setting for collaborative dialogue. This has been a far from uncontroversial body, many regarding it (along with its forerunner body the Thames and Waterways Steering Group) as a relatively powerless space that subordinates protest and vision to governmental procedure.[[55]](#endnote-55) In one sense then, one could interpret the LWC as a neoliberal endeavour. Nevertheless, the body signals how the Thames waterspace continues to configure a politics, whatever its potential and power relations at any particular moment.

***More tales on and off the riverbank: spaces and moments of disruption***

So far it has been argued that an understanding of the evolution of policy and networks of action for London’s waterspaces helps to disrupt uniform narratives and representations concerning the trajectories of neoliberal riparian urbanism. This final section considers possibilities for finding spaces and moments of disruption that can be positioned to continue this task.

*Figure 6 about here – NB Plate 5: Coin Street Community Builders leading the way in water sensitive urban design*

A first step is the simple recognition of the importance of struggles within the urban planning system, battling away (as it must) amongst the messy detail of developer concerns for viability, stakeholder fatigue, fragmented land ownership, physical constraints, and the contractual / legal agreements and mechanisms that help secure somewhat more inspirational and aspirational waterspaces for the city and its inhabitants. The Coin Street Community Builders development at King’s Reach on the South Bank is perhaps the most visible and iconic demonstration of such an alternative: a riverside mixed-use development of social housing, retailing and public space orchestrated and controlled by a community development trust[[56]](#endnote-56) (see Figure 6). Interestingly, this celebrated example of community activism and popular planning started from the river, with a campaign to protect the foreshore: a much-loved spot for one particular dog-owning resident (see Figure 7).[[57]](#endnote-57) The Coin Street development also benefitted from local government action through the financial and political support of the GLC, who sold the freehold for the site to the community in 1984. The spaces and services that exist today are a demonstration of how waterfront development can ‘start from the river’, building a closer relationship to it by appreciating waterspace as a setting that helps define and promote a place and provide a stage for activity. [[58]](#endnote-58) As part of the Coin Street development, foreshore access and the Thames Path has been protected and enhanced through the provision of jetties and steps down to the river foreshore, social housing is set back from the river (rather than running parallel to it), and the waterfront has been established as a ‘public place’ through the Bernie Spain Gardens and good design of the famous Oxo Tower mixed-use redevelopment on Stamford Wharf.

*Figure 7 about here- NB Plate 6: View of ‘Ernie’s Reach’ beside the Coin Street development’s Bernie Spain Gardens and Gabriel Wharf.*

A second source of narrative turbulence lies in recognising that some developers are beginning to demonstrate design and layout sensibilities more sensitive to their settings and in ways which are constructing new public spaces and forms of river access where previously there were none. The new Riverlight scheme of luxury apartments at Nine Elms, for example, whilst falling well short of expectations for social and affordable housing, nevertheless provides new public river frontages and open spaces. Moreover, the existing house boat owners at this site, following protracted action and negotiations with the developer, have successfully defended their long term presence on the riverfront and have been integrated alongside the scheme (see Figure 8). There is something more in these concessions than simply ‘the Danegeld traditionally paid by developers in exchange for planning permission for riverside sites’.[[59]](#endnote-59) It begins to speak to the possibilities of mediation and urban forms that do not exclusively claim and gate the river frontage. It is also testament to the continued purchase of the vocabulary of waterspace in local development plans and negotiations with developers. Equally, however, the development industry has shown some signs of recognising the challenges of water-sensitive design and how water and complexity can be both a tangible and intangible asset, crucial to the feel of a place.[[60]](#endnote-60) Part of this recognition is of course self-interest, since such ‘value engineering’ can develop more successful and profitable schemes. But it is also driven by forms of government action and public intervention, including recent EU Water Framework and Floods Directives, and biodiversity and habitat legislation, which encourage adaptive and climatically resilient built environments, with waste-water recycling, sustainable drainage systems and related eco-system benefits. Not that this is without complexity, either, since the building of climate change resilience into urban infrastructures can also conflict with public realm objectives.

*Figure 8 about here NB Plate 7: Houseboats in front of the Riverlight development at Nine Elms.*

By contrast, some of the negotiated outcomes that deliver public benefits through the planning system may be visually subtle and unspectacular urbanisms. Nevertheless, they have involved considerable commitment in terms of community time and campaigning alongside public financial, political and legal resources. Gaining access to the Thames foreshore is one such example. To many people this is a totemic space and a stroll along the foreshore remains the surest way of communicating a deeper understanding of its meaning and value as an asset.[[61]](#endnote-61) It is also an important educational and archaeological resource. Ensuring public access to the foreshore and along the Thames Path is never complete and remains an on-going and contested struggle. Partly this has involved the lobbying of statutory bodies by pressure groups and civic organisations. Some of the LRA's early work involved raising the profile of riverside infrastructures such as the steps and stairs to the foreshore, and attendant public rights of access, much of which had disappeared from the gaze of the planning system. This did much to refocus the mind of responsible agencies, notably the Port of London Authority (PLA), which in 1995 produced *Access to the River Thames: Steps, Stairs and Landing Places on the Tidal Thames*, described as ‘the first comprehensive survey of these facilities, their condition and status and addresses their usage’.[[62]](#endnote-62) Part of the effort also lies in continued civic activism and monitoring. In 2010, for example, a River Thames Society member singlehandedly repeated the PLA’s work to assess the condition of the steps and stairs some fifteen years later[[63]](#endnote-63). And much of this effort has emanated from the state, both in the form of reports such as the GLA’s 2003 *Access to the Thames—*which advocates public access, documents good practice, and outlines legal and political challenges—and through protracted negotiations and planning agreements with developers deploying whatever leverage legal and planning policy vocabularies can provide. [[64]](#endnote-64)

The struggle to retain the Thames as a working river signals further complications and disruptions to some of the more simplistic neoliberal narratives. The importance of retaining a working river, and the threat that increasing amounts of new development presented to river freight and passenger transport, were set out in the LRA’s 1992 *The Working Thames: An Agenda for Action*. Subsequently, a greater commitment to the working river has emerged through a range of policies and supporting documents, and it remains a key objective of the BRN. The need to safeguard key strategic wharfs for freight use has been part of this, set out initially in the 2005 *Safeguarded Wharves on the River Thames* (reviewed in 2013). So too has been the recognition of the need for more boatyard facilities (see GLA 2007, 2013) and strategies to increase passenger transport services on the river (see the 2013 *River Action Plan*).[[65]](#endnote-65) Statistics show that to date passenger transport strategies have been more successful than the provision of boatyards or indeed the actual use of safeguarded wharfs.[[66]](#endnote-66) While such initiatives have produced variable results, the point is that negotiated planning agreements with developers have been one means of securing the extension of public river services through the provision of new piers. Moreover, the growth of riverside residential communities has been one factor underpinning the public and financial viability of river services. The trajectories of causation, then, are complex and contradictory. The legal and planning battles pursued by the PLA and GLA to protect Peruvian and Orchard Wharfs for freight use by the aggregates industry, against the wishes of their residential developer landowners (including the pursuance of compulsory purchase orders), further demonstrates both the protracted detail of urban mediation and leads to a more complex sense of what might be thought of as intrinsically favourable relationships between private developers and (neoliberal) state interests.[[67]](#endnote-67)

***Conclusions***

This paper has sought to caution against constructing singular and hegemonic interpretations of neoliberal urbanism. It has mobilized the concept of waterspace to reveal how a site, such as the River Thames in London, can actively configure a networked politics of mediation and resistance to neoliberal landscapes of calculated abstraction and profitability. More than just an urban river, the Thames waterspace should be viewed as an ‘actant’ that draws in clusters of different actors involved in acute struggles over whose desires and readings should take preference.

Such struggles and groupings are historically dynamic, not always coherent, and frequently transient in character and the paper has described the dynamics and tensions between different versions of London’s waterspaces over time. Moreover, the paper has not sought to suggest that all is well and sturdy in the contemporary public and civic mediation of waterspace urbanism in London. The current politics of austerity and redirection of financial resources away from public institutions in general, and planning departments and personnel in particular, certainly undermines the accountability of the global development industry and its waterfront ambitions.[[68]](#endnote-68) Those who hoped that the Coin Street development marked a more general future for community owned and developed waterspace London may rightly feel that a battle was lost. However, equally we should not easily dismiss or lose sight of the kinds of alternative insights into the river as a more meaningful and differentiated space that historically have been produced by these politics, or of what imaginings might yet be produced.

Planning is an important arena through which such groups pursue their agendas and where struggles are enacted over who and what is allowed, with what rights. The role and practice of planning during a neoliberal era will remain complex and contradictory. Neoliberal rhetoric concerning the superiority of market mechanisms to organize the optimal use of land will continue to cohabit uneasily with a belief in some form of state intervention for the public and environmental good[[69]](#endnote-69). Local authorities attempting to redress fiscal imbalances may have little option but to rely on entrepreneurial planning practices that enable private investors to realise market development opportunities in exchange for new land- and tax-based incomes. Moreover, to many commentators the soft spaces of collaborative planning frameworks have a distinctively neoliberal underpinning concealing more than they make open and democratic[[70]](#endnote-70).

However, it is important not to pre-script these planning practices. The imagined dominance of neoliberal outcomes is in itself a figment of neoliberal ideology[[71]](#endnote-71). What this paper has sought to resist is the idea that London’s waterspaces have been passively rolled over by a monolithic neoliberal property machine. With this kind of conceptual analytical short-cut, the risk is that we lose a more nuanced understanding of the composition of power and a more dynamic sense of how development processes have been mediated and, therefore, of the possibilities for future mediation and change on London’s waterspaces. Many of these possibilities still lie in and around the planning system, with the ideas and understandings that can be deployed there to argue through the spaces between what is ‘mine’, ‘ours’ and ‘theirs’. Other possibilities, however, must come from the energies and visions of the city’s current and future inhabitants to challenge and change ruling ideas; insights, perhaps, which might come from a walk along the Thames foreshore?

**Figure 5: Principles and policies for the Blue Ribbon Network in the 2004 *London PLA,* Section 4c**

Six principles to inform decisions taken in respect of the Blue Ribbon Network:

* protecting and enhancing the multi-functional nature of the Blue Ribbon Network to support uses and activities that require a water or waterside location;
* protecting and enhancing the Blue Ribbon Network as part of the public realm and London’s open space network, and promoting sport, leisure and education;
* exploiting the potential for water-borne transport, leisure, tourism and waterway support industries, and capturing the investment potential of the Network through appropriate waterside development and regeneration;
* ensuring the Blue Ribbon Network is accessible for everyone and that its cultural and environmental assets are used to stimulate appropriate development in areas of regeneration and need;
* increasing use of the Blue Ribbon Network for transport of people and goods; and
* protecting and enhancing the biodiversity and landscape of the Blue Ribbon Network, and having regard to the need for water supplies, sewage disposal and the risk of flooding.

A selection of Blue Ribbon Network policies for waterspaces:

* The London Plan requires sustainable and safe use of the water and waterside land (Policy 4C.2). Policy 4C.12 sets sustainable growth priorities for the Blue Ribbon Network, prioritising uses that specifically require a waterside location - water transport, leisure, recreation, wharves and flood defences.
* Policy 4C.20 calls for design starting from the water. Development should integrate successfully with the water space with a mix of uses to ensure an inclusive accessible and active waterside. Design statements, required by Policy 4C.21, should include a statement of how the water space will be used and affected.
* The importance of access points to the Network is recognised by Policy 4C.17, which encourages the extension of waterside routes, and new access points. Waterway facilities, infrastructure and activities that support use and enjoyment of the Blue Ribbon Network are encouraged (Policy 4C.18); as well as moorings facilities where the impact on navigation, biodiversity and character is not harmful (Policy 4C.19).
* There is a requirement to protect facilities for passenger and tourist traffic, and to introduce new facilities in Opportunity Areas and Areas for Intensification (Policy 4C.13). Policy 4C.16 protects facilities for sport and leisure and encourages new development and facilities that increase sport and leisure use.
* Policy 4C.14 supports new development and facilities for water-based freight transport. The London Plan also allows for the safeguarding of certain wharves against alternative redevelopment. The potential for conflicts of use alongside safeguarded wharves is identified (Policy 4C.15).
* The London Plan recognises the natural value of the Blue Ribbon Network and its contribution to London’s open space network (Policy 4C.3, Policy 4C.4).
* To progress the delivery of these policies, the London Plan requires relevant boroughs to designate a Thames Policy Area (Policy 4C.25) for which they should prepare a detailed appraisal and an action plan (Policy 4C.26).

Source: Derived from GLA (2006) *Review of the Blue Ribbon Network for the planning and*

*Source: Spatial Development Committee: Rapporteur Tony Arbour*. A revised set of GLA Blue Ribbon Network have been set out in Chapter 7 of the GLA (2014) *Draft Further Alterations to the London Plan*, pp.272-284.

**Endnotes**

1. ‘Trojan Bus’ 1975 Series 2 episode 10 of *The Sweeney* (Thames Television, 1975-1978) has a particularly enthralling river chase denouement, as does the feature film adaption *Sweeney!* (EMI Films, 1977). This is not to suggest that the future potential of abandoned riverside sites been ignored by local planning authorities. See for example, London Docklands Study Team, *Docklands: Redevelopment Proposals for East London: A Report to the Greater London Council and the Department of the Environment* (London: Greater London Council, 1973); Docklands Joint Committee, *London Docklands Strategic Plan* (London, Docklands Joint Committee, July 1976). [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Be warned that this 2012 remake has been described as ‘a brainless joyride that ends up spinning its wheels in macho clichés’. See S. Rose, *Guardian*, Wednesday, 27 June 2012 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. See R. Moore, ‘The London River Park: place for the people or a private playground?’ *Observer*, 13th November 2011; L. Dearden ‘Proposals for a £600m floating cycle route over River Thames in London’, *Independent*, 7th October 2014; L. Edmonds, ‘Plans to regenerate Victoria Embankment with £5.5m swimming pool that floats on the River Thames’, *London Evening Standard,* 14th August 2014. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. D. Harvey, ‘From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism’ *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 71 (1989), 3-17; A. Breen and D. Rigby, *The New Waterfront: A Worldwide Urban Success Story* (New York, 1996); R. Marshall, ed., *Waterfronts in Post-Industrial Cities* (2001). [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. For accounts of neoliberal urbanism see: H. Leitner, J. Peck and E.S Sheppard (eds), *Contesting neoliberalism: urban frontiers*, (New York, 2007); N. Theodore, J. Peck and N. Brenner, ‘Neoliberal urbanism: cities and the rule of markets’, in G. Bridge and S. Watson (eds), *The new Blackwell companion to the city*, (Oxford, 2011); J. Peck, N.J. Theodore and N. Brenner, ‘Neoliberal Urbanism Redux?’ *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, (2013), 37, 3, 1091-9. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. The concept of parasitic cities is first discussed in D. Harvey, *Social Justice and the City* (Baltimore, 1973), 234. See A. Merrifield, ‘Whose City? The Parasites’, of course…’ <<http://antipodefoundation.org/2013/06/18/intervention-whose-city/> > [accessed 28 September 2014] and A. Merrifield, *The Politics of the Encounter: Urban Theory and Protest Under Planetary Urbanization*, (Athens, GA, 2013) [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. M. Davidson, ‘London’s Blue Ribbon Network: riverside renaissance along the Thames’ in *Regenerating London* , ed. R. Imrie, L. Lees and M. Raco (2009), 173-191. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. E. Swyngedouw, F Moulaert and A Rodriguez, ‘Neoliberal Urbanisation in Europe: Large-Scale Urban Development Projects and the New Urban Policy’, *Antipode*, (2002) 34, 3, 380-404 [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. J. Barnes, B Colenutt, and P. Malone. "London: Docklands and the State." *City, Capital and Water* (1996): 15-36; quotation from 34 [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. See for example D. Massey *World City* (Cambridge, 2007) [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. M. Keith,‘Urban Regeneration and the City of Experts’ in *The Routledge Companion to Urban Regeneration*, ed. M.E. Leary and J. McCarthy, (2013), 168-178; quotation from 169. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Ibid, 169. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. S. Brownill, ‘Just add water: Waterfront regeneration as a global phenomenon’ in *The Routledge Companion to Urban Regeneration* ed. M.E. Leary and J. McCarthy (2013), 45-55. See also S. Brownill, ‘London Docklands revisited: the dynamics of waterfront development’ in *Transforming Urban Waterfronts: Fixity and Flow*, ed. J. Desfor, J. Laidley, Q. Stevens and D. Schubert (2011), 121-142. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. See P. Pinch and I. Munt, ‘Blue Belts: An Agenda for 'Waterspace' Planning in the UK', *Planning Practice and Research*, 17 (2002), 159–174 [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. B. Latour, *We have never been modern*. (Hemel Hempstead, 1993). Probably the clearest outline of Actor Network Theory (ANT), along with post-structuralist understandings of space and place, which are used in the treatment of the River Thames in this paper, is provided by J. Murdoch, *Post-structuralist geography: a guide to relational space*. (2005) [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Greater London Authority, *Review of the Blue Ribbon Network for the Planning and Spatial Development Committee: Rapporteur Tony Arbour.* (2006) *<*legacy.london.gov.uk/assembly/reports/plansd/blue-ribbon.rtf> [accessed 2 October 2014] [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. See Pinch and Munt [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. G. Worsley, ‘Disaster-on-Thames’, *Telegraph*, 21st July 2001; D. Sudjic, ‘Sold down the river’, *Observer*, 18th May 2003. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. M Anton, B.L. Garrett, A. Hess, E. Miles and T. Moreau, ‘London’s Olympic waterspace: capturing transition’ *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 19 (2013), 125-138. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Davidson. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Davidson, 189. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. Pinch and Munt. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. See the Royal Town Planning Institute’s recasting of the role of planning as ‘mediating space and making of place’ A new vision for planning: delivering sustainable communities, settlements and places. 27 June 2001 <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/9321/RTPI-New-Vision-for-Planning.pdf>> [accessed 10 September 2014]. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. See L. Seymour, *Nature and psychological well-being* English Nature Research Report Number 533 (2003)and Natural England, *Our Natural Health Service: The role of the natural environment in maintaining healthy lives.* (2009) [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. M. Hebbert, ‘Who Plans for the Blue Belt ?’ in *River Calling: Printed Conference Proceedings* , (London, London Rivers Association, September 1998). [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
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27. London Planning Advisory Committee, *Planning Guidelines for Permanently-Moored Vessels and Structures on the River Thames in Greater London*. (London, LPAC 1990); London Planning Advisory Committee , *Advice to Government on Strategic Planning Guidance for London* (1994). [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. River Thames Working Group, *A Report into Transport on the River Thames* (1995) [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. Government Office for London. *Thames Strategy*. Prepared by OVE ARUP Partnership (1995). [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. Government Office for London *RPG3b/9b Strategic Planning Guidance for the River Thames,* (1997) [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. London Rivers Association (LRA). *The Working Thames: An Agenda for Action* (1992); LRA, *Key Industrial Sites on River Thames Lost over Last Five Years*(1994); LRA, *Rivers of Meaning: Getting in Touch with the Thames* (1996) (compiled/edited by R. Jaijee and K. Thomas); LRA, *Putting Rivers on the Map: Blue Belt and the Future of Urban Rivers* (2000).LRA, *River Calling* (2002) (compiled/edited by I. Munt and R. Jaijee). [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. For his account of the distinction between ‘abstract’ and ‘differential’ space see H. Lefebvre *The Production of Space* (Oxford1991). Lefebvre’s ideas and relevance to planning practice is discussed by M. E Leary, ‘A Lefebvrian analysis of the production of glorious, gruesome public space in Manchester’, *Progress in Planning*, 85, (2013), 1-52 [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. River Calling,4 [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. River Calling, 6 [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. See Pinch and Munt. [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. Greater London Authority (GLA), *The London Plan: Section 4C The Blue Ribbon Network*, (2004), 193. GLA, *Draft Further Alterations to the London Plan: Blue Ribbon Network: Policy 7.24 2014*,.272 < <https://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/planning/london-plan/draft-further-alterations-to-the-london-plan>> [accessed 10 September 2014] [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. See <http://thamesriverstrust.org.uk/>; <http://www.thames21.org.uk/>; <http://www.thames-explorer.org.uk/>; <http://www.riverthamessociety.org.uk/home.aspx>; <http://riverusergroup.com/site/>; <http://totallythames.org/trust>. [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. Thanks to one of the referees for reinforcing this point and the connection to Lefebvre’s conceptual ideas. [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. Countryside Commission, *Thames Path Design Guide*, 1991. K. Wilkie, *Thames Landscape Strategy: Hampton To Kew / Environmental Design for the Thames Landscape Steering Group* (1994). [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
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42. Environment Agency, *Thames Landscape Strategy Review: Hampton to Kew* (2012) [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. See V. Taylor, 'Watershed democracy or ecological hinterland? London and the Thames river basin, 1857-1986', in *Rivers Lost - Rivers Regained*, ed. D. Schott, M. Knoll and U. Lübken , (forthcoming 2016). For an outline of Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy see: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32000L0060> [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
44. Environment Agency, *River Basin Management Plan for the Thames River Basin District* (2009); Thames 21/Thames Estuary Partnership, *Your Tidal Thames Pilot Project: Final Project Report* (2012) [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
45. The River Restoration Centre, *The London Rivers Action Plan*. (2009) See also Restore Partnership, *Rivers by Design: Rethinking development and river restoration,* ( 2013), along with the work and networks of action outlined in Environment Agency, *River restoration: A Stepping Stone to Urban Regeneration Highlighting the Opportunities in South London* (2002) and Environment Agency, *Bringing your rivers back to life:* *A strategy* *for restoring rivers in North London.* (2006) [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
46. See Convention on Biological Diversity, ‘History of the Convention,’ < <http://www.cbd.int/history/>>, [accessed 22 September 2014]. [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
47. H.W.J Rittel, and M.W. Webber, ‘Dilemmas in a general theory of planning’, *Policy Sciences*, 4, (1973) 159-169; W-N. Xiang, ‘Working with wicked problems in socio-ecological systems: Awareness, acceptance, and adaptation’ *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 110, (2013) 1–4. [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
48. J.E. Innes, and D. Booher, *Planning with Complexity* (2010) [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
49. J. Forester, *Planning in the Face of Power*. (Berkeley, 1989); J. Forester, *Dealing with Differences: Dramas of Mediating Public Disputes*. (Oxford, 2009). P. Healey, *Collaborative Planning: Shaping Spaces in Fragmented Societies*. (1997) [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
50. L. Sandercock, *Mongrel Cities: Cosmopolis II* (2003) [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
51. J. Donald, *Imagining the Modern City,* (Minneapolis,1999), 147, cited in Sandercock, 85 [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
52. See R.E. Freeman *Strategic management: a stakeholder approach* (Cambridge, 2010). I am indebted to one of the anonymous referees for this point. [↑](#endnote-ref-52)
53. G. Haughton and P. Allmendinger ‘Soft spaces in planning’, *Town and Country Planning*, 76 (2007) 306-308; G. Haughton, P. Allmendinger and S. Oosterlynck, ‘Spaces of neoliberal experimentation: soft spaces, postpolitics, and neoliberal governmentality’ *Environment and Planning A*, 45 (2013) 217 – 234 [↑](#endnote-ref-53)
54. G. De Roo and G. Porter, *Fuzzy Planning: The role of Actors in a Fuzzy Governance Environment* (Farnham, 2007). [↑](#endnote-ref-54)
55. GLA (2006) urged that the LRC ‘must not be a ‘talking shop’ (p.8). See also H. Muir, ‘Call to turn tide on building beside London waterways’ *Guardian*, 3rd February 2005 [↑](#endnote-ref-55)
56. T. Brindley, Y. Rydin, Y and G. Stoker, *Remaking Planning: the Politics of Urban Change in the Thatcher Years*, 1989) [↑](#endnote-ref-56)
57. It is worth remembering that ‘Ernie’s Reach’, the informal name given by the Coin Street community to the kink in the Thames footpath near Gabriel Wharf, remains a testament to the power of concerted individual and community action against the ambitions of private developers and managerialist planning. [↑](#endnote-ref-57)
58. LRA, Rivers of Meaning, 22 [↑](#endnote-ref-58)
59. Sudjic [↑](#endnote-ref-59)
60. construction industry research and information association (CIRIA), *Water sensitive urban design in the UK: ideas for built environment practitioners*, (2013) See also: J. Abbot, P. Davies, P. Simkins, C. Morgan, D. Levin, P. Robinson, *Creating water sensitive places* (2013). [↑](#endnote-ref-60)
61. LRA (1996) 7 [↑](#endnote-ref-61)
62. Port of London Authority (PLA), *Access to the River Thames: Steps, Stairs and Landing Places on the Tidal Thames* (1996) [↑](#endnote-ref-62)
63. Peter Finch conducted this survey for the River Thames Society’s Central Tideway and Estuary Branch, published under the title *Access to the River Thames: Steps, stairs and landing places on the tidal Thames*. <<http://www.riverthamessociety.org.uk/CMS/FILES/AccesstotheRiverThamesCOMPLETEPDF1.pdf>> [accessed 24 September 2014]. [↑](#endnote-ref-63)
64. J. Biggs (on behalf of GLA), *Access to the Thames: Scrutiny of the Thames Foreshore and Path* (2003). <http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/archives/assembly-reports-plansd-thames-access_thames_nomaps.pdf> [accessed 24 September 2014] [↑](#endnote-ref-64)
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66. See Mayor of London, *London Plan Annual Monitoring Report 9,* 2011-12 (2013) [↑](#endnote-ref-66)
67. Port of London Authority, *Annual Review* 2013 (2013).11 [↑](#endnote-ref-67)
68. See O. Wainwright, ‘The truth about property developers: how they are exploiting planning authorities and ruining our cities’, *Guardian*, 17 September 2014 [↑](#endnote-ref-68)
69. T. Tasan-Kok and G. Baeten (eds), *Contradictions of Neoliberal Planning: Cities, Policies, and Politics*, (2013). [↑](#endnote-ref-69)
70. Haughton *et al*. The same might also be said of the authenticity of the contemporary democratic rhetoric of localism and new localist institutional arrangements. See M Buser ‘Tracing the democratic narrative: big society, localism and civic engagement, *Local Government Studies*, (2013) 39, 3-21 [↑](#endnote-ref-70)
71. Thanks again to one of the anonymous referees for the phrasing of this point. [↑](#endnote-ref-71)